DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 755 CS 212 136

AUTHOR Langer, Judith A.
TITLE The Process of Understanding Literature. Report Series 2.1.
INSTITUTION Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature, Albany, NY.
SPONS AGENCY National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 89
GRANT G008720278
NOTE 32p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature, School of Education, 1400 Washington Ave., ED B-9, University of Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY 12222 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Critical Reading; Grade 7; Grade 11; Prose; Protocol Analysis; Qualitative Research; Reader Response; *Reader Text Relationship; *Reading Processes; Reading Research; Secondary Education; Text Structure
IDENTIFIERS Text Factors

ABSTRACT

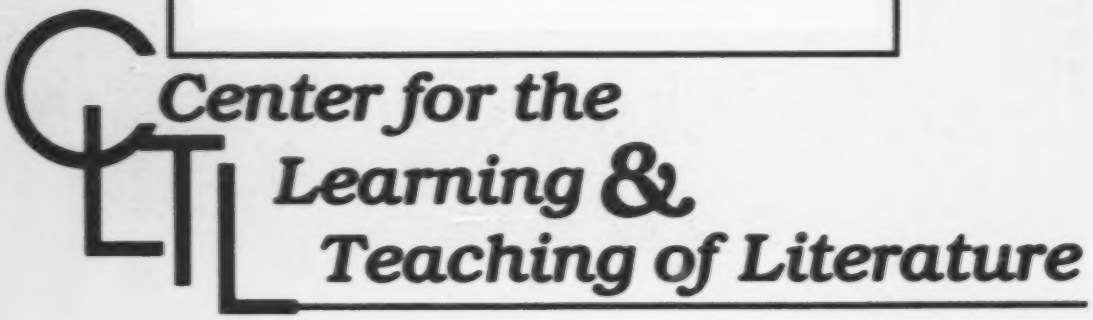
A qualitative study examined the ways in which middle school and high school students create meanings when they are reading literary and non-literary texts. Subjects, 18 seventh-grade and 18 eleventh-grade students attending schools in an inner city or a suburban school district and judged by their teachers to be either above, at, or below average for their grade level, produced think-aloud protocols as they read two short stories, two poems, a science text, and a social studies text. The think-aloud protocols were analyzed and a set of patterns of student concerns were identified. Results indicated that the process of reading literary and non-literary texts is one that involves a four broad recursive stances that the reader takes toward the text: (1) being out and stepping into an envisionment; (2) being in and moving through an envisionment; (3) stepping back and rethinking what one knows; and (4) stepping out and objectifying the experience. (Fifty-three references and a selection from one student's think-aloud protocol are attached.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED315755

The Process of Understanding Literature

Judith A. Langer



University at Albany
State University of New York
School of Education
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS212136

The Process of Understanding Literature

Judith A. Langer

Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature
The University at Albany
State University of New York
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222

Report Series 2.1

1989

Preparation of this report was supported in part by grant number G008720278, which is cosponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI/ED), and by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of OERI/ED or NEA, and no official endorsement of either agency should be inferred.

Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature

The Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature is a research and development center located at the University at Albany, State University of New York. The Center was established in 1987 with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Center's mission is to improve the teaching of content knowledge and critical-thinking strategies that contribute to literary understanding, particularly at the middle and high school levels.

Center-sponsored research falls into three broad areas: 1) surveys of current practice in the teaching of literature, including studies of both what is taught and how it is taught; 2) studies of alternative approaches to instruction and their effects on students' knowledge of literature and critical-thinking abilities; and 3) studies of alternative approaches to the assessment of literature achievement, including both classroom-based and larger-scale approaches to testing.

The Center also promotes good practice in the teaching of literature through conferences and seminars, through the development of computerized bibliographies on research and practice in the teaching of literature, and through publications that present the Center's own research and provide other resources for research and practice. To receive a list of current publications, please write to CLTL, School of Education, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222.

Director:	Arthur N. Applebee	Center Faculty:	Lil Brannon
			Eugene Garber
Co-Directors:	Judith A. Langer		Peter Johnston
	Alan C. Purves		C.H. Knoblauch
			James Marshall
Assistant Director:	Genevieve T. Bronk		Arnulfo Ramirez
			Wayne Ross
			Sean Walmsley

The Process of Understanding Literature

Judith A. Langer
University at Albany
State University of New York

Across the decade there has been ample evidence that in all subjects, students must learn to think and reason more fully about what they are reading (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987, 1989; National Commission on Excellence, 1983). In response, reform movements have called for more thoughtful academic coursework. For English teachers, this has meant a focus on the reading of literature.

In general, the role of literature in the K-12 curriculum is inadequately understood. While the teaching of literature is often considered to be a way to introduce students to the cultural knowledge, the great thoughts, and the high culture of our society (Bloom, 1987; Cheyney, 1987; Hirsch, 1987; Ravitch & Finn, 1987), its role in the development of the sharp and critical mind is generally ignored. However, there is evidence from a number of sources that the process of understanding literature is a natural and necessary part of the well-developed intellect.

Elstein, Shulman, and Sprafka (1978), for example, have shown that doctors who usually use "logical" thinking to do their work and solve their problems sometimes resort to "storytelling" to push their ideas along; narrative thought is a productive alternative for them. Bruner (1986) argues that there are two modes of cognitive thought--narrative and paradigmatic-- each with its own way of viewing reality. Deep thinking, he suggests, is better achieved by using both the ordered thought of the scientist and the humanely inquisitive thought of the storyteller. From the paradigmatic mode, facts, objectivity, logical proofs, and reasoned hypotheses are gained, while from the study of literature we come to understand the "vicissitudes of human intention." Britton similarly (1983) describes the rule-governed thought of the scientist and the many-sidedness of literary thought, suggesting the complexity of the latter is necessary for understanding the human experience. It is this focus on the human situation described by both Bruner and Britton which suggests that a literary reading draws the individual into the act of thinking--as she or he experiences the events, emotions, and intricacies of human life. The experience, in turn, becomes available for analysis and reflection.

Although such issues underlying literary understanding are critical for the next generation of work in the teaching of literature, they are not sufficiently well developed to drive new conceptualizations of the role of literature in the curriculum, nor of how to teach it. Not only must we learn more about distinctions between literary and non-literary understanding, but also about the nature of the meaning-making process itself. However, research in the understanding of literature has suffered a hiatus during the past decade. Klemenz-Belgart (1981) suggests the need to use current theories of text understanding in studying ways by which readers comprehend text, while theorists as diverse as Bahktin (1973), Culler (1980), and Barthes (1974) call for increased understanding of the conventions readers refer to during the sense-making activity. For example, Culler (1980) suggests the need for a reorientation of focus from corpus to interpretive strategies:

> To account for the form and meaning of literary works is to make explicit the special conventions and procedures of interpretation that enable readers to move from the linguistic meaning of sentences to the literary meaning of works.... In brief, I am arguing that if the study of literature is a discipline, it must become a poetics: a study of the conditions of meaning and thus a study of reading. (p. 49)

It was to better understand the act of literary reading, particularly in students, that this study was undertaken--to begin to describe the nature of literary understanding, and to relate it to the kinds of meaning-building students engage in when they read text material in their other coursework. Rather than examining the expressed content of students' understandings, the focus was on the approaches they use toward developing that understanding during the reading of both literary and non-literary works. The study asked this question: How do students go about understanding literature, and how is it related to the ways they make meaning when reading science and social studies works?

Theoretical Starting Points

When one begins a study of this sort, there are a number of theoretical assumptions that are implicit in the conceptualization of the work. In this study, there are at least three such assumptions: 1) that reading is an experience of growing understandings that change over time, and thus is essentially an interpretive act (this is meant in the cognitive meaning-building sense used by reading theorists, and not in the sense of "formal" interpretation discussed by literary critics), 2) that although meaning resides in the reader, not the text, readers follow certain conventions which are signaled by linguistic features in the piece being read, and 3) that approaches toward reading are functionally driven, informed by pragmatic needs to personalize or objectify experience, and affect the universe of discourse the reader selects to guide envisionment-building.

Reading as an Act of Envisionment Building

Reading is sense-making, an act of becoming--where new questions, insights, and understandings develop as the reading progresses, while understandings that were once held are subject to modification, reinterpretation, and even dismissal (Fillmore, 1981; Iser, 1978; J. Langer, 1987; Suleiman, 1980). At any point in a reading, the individual has a local envisionment, a personal text-world embodying all she or he understands, assumes, or imagines up to that point in the reading (see J. Langer, 1985, 1986, 1987). However, this is momentary--subject to change in response to subsequent thoughts that may be (but are not necessarily) text-based. The final envisionment, then, is never the sum of previous traces, but is instead an evolving whole, which itself is subject to change well after the pages have been removed from sight. In this view, reading <u>is</u> interpretation (Sontag, 1956), and if one wishes to understand this act of interpretation it is necessary to examine the reading experience across time, as the reader traverses the course of meaning-making.

Relationships Between the Reader and the Text

The question posed by this study about the different kinds of thinking readers experience in literary and non-literary readings suggests from the outset the belief that the text cannot be ignored in its contribution to the reader's meaning; although the reader's purpose plays a major role in how the meaning is orchestrated, the text itself influences the reading. Texts function semiotically, providing an array of signs and guideposts to evoke ideas and images which are helpful in signaling and underscoring particular ideas that are important to the reader's construal of a particular piece--they follow conventions that are helpful in arousing readers' thoughts in ways that go beyond what words alone can do (Grice, 1975; Iser, 1974; Searle, 1969). As Pratt (1976) and Smith (1978) have argued, the issue of literary and non-literary readings requires examination of the pragmatic function of the texts themselves. It has been suggested that a social relationship develops between reader and text (Booth, 1988; Hunt, and Vipond, 1985; Vipond and Hunt, 1984; Vipond, Hunt, and Wheeler, 1987) in which readers, as in everyday discourse, establish a certain social orientation relative to their perceptions of the text. While readers may respond differently to texts according to their perceptions of the implied text or implied audience (Booth, 1988; Rabinowitz, 1987), they make the choice of how to orient themselves, and this determines whether their approaches toward understanding a particular text will proceed in a predominantly literary or non-literary manner. When readers treat the text in a literary manner, as S. Langer (1942) suggests in her work on the symbolic function of language, from the very first few words they are drawn into the text, leaving the everyday world behind. They seek to identify the genre from the moment reading begins, and these early hypotheses, although subject to change, help shape how they read and the meanings they create (Langer, 1986). Thus, the reader "weaves a web of feelings, sensations, images, and ideas" between the self and the text (Rosenblatt, 1978), and a study of the growth of understanding must explain, not ignore, that relationship.

Objective and Subjective Realities

S. Langer (1967) describes human feelings and understandings as emanating both from outside the individual and from within. She refers to these as objective and subjective experience, explaining that together they create a unity of meaning. However, the different starting points (the rational outer world and the emotional inner world) lead to related but somewhat different symbol systems and approaches toward meaning.

Several scholars who examine language and meaning have distinguished between these two universes of discourse. For example, S. Langer (1942), in her work on the process of symbolization, distinguishes between presentational and discursive techniques; Rosenblatt (1978), focusing on the reader's role, distinguishes between efferent and transactional reading; and Britton (1970), in his work on the development of writing abilities, distinguishes between spectator and participant roles. Although developed for different purposes, each set of concepts deals in some way with qualitative differences in literary and non-literary experiences. Each describes on the one hand a situation where the person holds meaning apart, in quest of a more logical and rational understanding, and on the other hand a situation where the person becomes personally enmeshed in the text world, responding on a more emotional plane. The first can be considered the way of scientific reading (as in Bruner's notion of paradigmatic thought), while the other can be considered the way of literary reading (as in Bruner's narrative thought). The

goal of this study was to learn more about the ways in which these modes of understanding are enacted during the reading of literary and non-literary texts.

Related Studies

Although there have been many specific studies of "response" to literature, these have relied primarily on content analyses of expressed responses rather than having examined the knowledge and strategies that contribute to students' understandings. From these studies we know: that younger children focus on "action" rather than "interpretation" (Applebee, 1978; Mason, 1974; NAEP, 1973); that ability and achievement differences have little effect on the content of expressed responses except as by-products of comprehension problems (Angelotti, 1972; Auerbach, 1974; Faggiani, 1971); that older students are more likely to give "interpretive" or "formal analytic" responses (Cooper, 1969; Purves, 1973; McGreal, 1976); that girls are more likely than boys to verbalize "engagement" or "involvement" in a story (Purves, 1973); that the content of students' responses varies over time during the course of reading or rereading (Beach, 1972; Squire, 1964; Angelotti, 1972; Britton, 1954); and that there are strong effects tied to the particular literary selection chosen as stimulus (Angelotti, 1972; Cornaby, 1974; Cooper, 1969; Purves, 1973; Weber, 1973).

A small number of studies have focused on the strategies readers use when approaching text. Hunt and Vipond (1985) distinguish among story-driven, information-driven, and point-driven orientations, indicating ways in which the different purposes for reading affect response, while Vipond and Hunt (1984) illustrate particular cognitive strategies associated with point-driven readings of literary texts. Jacobsen (1982) describes college students' unwillingness to suspend disbelief or apply their own experiences in order to enter the text-world or "potential space" of short stories, and Dillon (1982) describes three styles of reading based on readers' perceptions of the chronological sequence or event chain of the story, and compares ways in which readers understand life and literature. Taken together, these studies provide compelling evidence concerning language and thought that supports further study into the ways by which students create their understandings. To address this issue, the present study focused on the act of reading--from the reader's vantage point.

The Study

In particular, this qualitative study sought to describe the ways in which middle and high school students create meanings when they are reading literary and non-literary texts. The student-informants attended two cooperating school districts, one an inner city and one a suburban district. The superintendents, principals, and English department chairpersons all expressed an interest in supporting Literature Center project activities, of which this study was a part. One middle school and one high school were selected in each district. The suburban schools were in middle class bedroom communities; students were generally bused to schools; approximately 49% of the high school graduates went on to 4 year college; and 29% went on to other forms of postsecondary school education. The city schools were in areas where businesses and residences were nearby; where middle class, lower middle class, and poor children generally walked to school rather than being bused; where 27% of the students went on to 4 year college; and where 39% went on to other forms of postsecondary education.

To enlist participants, the teachers and research assistants described the project to the students, inviting them to become involved; all 7th and 11th graders and their parents also received letters requesting their consent for participation. Of those who responded, 18 were chosen at each grade level, with 9 students at each grade in each school (three judged by their teachers as average, three as above average, and three as below the norm for their grade in their school). Thus, the 36 students were selected to represent a cross-section in order to permit us to learn about literary meaning-making strategies across a variety of students.

Materials

A general review of possible short stories, poems, science pieces and social studies pieces led to consideration of some 80 works, all of which were typical of those found in school collections and magazines designed for students in junior and senior high school, and each of which could be read by both 7th and 11th graders. The initial selection was narrowed to 8 poems, 8 stories, 4 social studies texts, and 4 science texts which were then field-tested for appropriateness. The field tests consisted of students reading and discussing the texts, and indicating whether they thought the texts would be familiar to and of interest to other students like themselves. The chosen texts did not present extreme difficulty for any of the field test students to read, and met their criteria for recommendation. The final selections were: "Man by the Fountain" (short story), "I See You Never" (short story), "The Fish" (poem), "Forgive My Guilt" (poem), "Birth of the Moon" (science) and "E.R.A.: Triumph of the American Nation" (social studies).

Procedures

Students engaged in an intake interview, during-reading think-alouds, after-reading questions to tap their understandings, and an exit interview in which they were asked to compare their experiences in reading the various pieces. This report will focus on the think-alouds the students engaged in during the reading of each piece. The results of this procedure are of particular interest because think-aloud protocols have proven to be an effective technique for understanding how students orchestrate their reading and writing strategies over time. (Flower and Hayes, 1980a; Hayes and Flower, 1980b; Hunt and Vipond, 1985; Langer, 1986).

During the first meeting, each student was introduced to the think-aloud procedure, and practiced it with preselected short stories, poems, social studies pieces, and science pieces until he or she felt comfortable with the experience. The students were encouraged to verbalize their thoughts when they felt comfortable doing so, rather than at a predetermined boundary such as at the end of a sentence or paragraph. This, it was hoped, would minimize the distractive effect of the think-aloud procedure on the development of meaning.

Each student participated in 6 think-alouds in response to 2 short stories, 2 poems, 1 science text, and 1 social studies text. Students were asked to read each piece in the manner in which they generally read pieces of that sort. Although they could have been prompted to read the poems and short stories for literary purposes (for the experience) and the science and social studies pieces for non-literary purposes (to learn information), the choice of orientation (based on the influence of the text's structure and their own purpose) was left to the students themselves.

Analyses

All analyses were qualitative in nature, involving successive steps of data reduction and verification. To accomplish this, each of the transcripts was carefully read, first separately and later in comparison with the other transcripts, in a search for patterns of "on-line" concerns the students voiced during reading. Once identified, specific evidence for these patterns was sought by returning to the transcripts for examples in the students' own language. A recursive process of refining patterns and returning to the transcripts for evidence was repeated several times, until the final patterns had been verified against all pertinent student data. Throughout the process of analysis, both the categories and the comments within categories were repeatedly compared for comparability and uniqueness. All analyses sought to uncover the students' concerns during each reading. This procedure permitted the primary focus to be on the students-as-informers, to enable a deeper understanding of the students' understandings and interpretations of their reading of literary and non-literary works. The endpoint of the analytic recursions provided a set of categories along with students' language samples, and each language example was identified as to the time it occurred during the reading (beginning, middle, or end).

Although the readings of all pieces were analyzed, and the findings reported are based on the complete set of analyses, two pieces, a short story ("I See You Never") and a science passage ("Birth of the Moon"), will be used as examples throughout this report.

"I See You Never" is about Mr. Ramirez's immanent deportation to Mexico. He is an illegal alien who has clearly enjoyed living and working in the United States and would like to stay. However, he over-extended the tenure of his visa, was apprehended by the police, and was escorted to his apartment in order to pick up his belongings. Mrs. O'Brian, his landlady, seems deeply moved by his predicament, slowly realizing, as Mr. Ramirez had pointed out, that they would never see each other again.

"Birth of the Moon" is about the impactor theory of the moon's formation, positing that billions of years ago a planet-like object with a core of iron impacted with the earth, sending hot gasses and other material into space. These materials held together, forming the moon. The theory explains that the moon and earth have both similar and different chemistries because of the ways in which particular chemicals were deposited or interacted as a result of the original impact.

Results

The most compelling findings in this study concern the meaning-making process itself and the approaches the students used when reading literary and non-literary works. These findings indicate that the process of reading all texts, both literary and non-literary, is one that involves a variety of changing stances that the reader takes toward the text. The focus of the reader's concerns in each stance differs considerably. The sections that follow will first explore the nature of these stances, and then turn to the characteristics that differentiated readers' approaches to literary as compared to non-literary texts.

Stances

Analyses of the think-aloud reports indicated that the readers were always actively engaged in creating meanings when they read. However, as they developed their meanings across time, their stance (the way in which they related to the text) changed, with each stance adding a somewhat different dimension to the reader's understanding of the entire piece. These stances were recursive rather than linear (they had the potential to recur at any point in the reading) and were a function of varying reader/text relationships.

The four major stances in the process of understanding were:

* Being Out and Stepping Into an Envisionment - In this stance, readers attempted to make initial contacts with the genre, content, structure, and language of the text by using prior knowledge, experiences, and surface features of the text to identify essential elements in order to begin to construct an envisionment.

* Being In and Moving Through an Envisionment - In this stance, readers were immersed in their understandings, using their previously constructed envisionment, prior knowledge and the text itself to further their creation of meaning. For the readers, meaning-making moved along with the text; they were caught up in a story or carried along by the argument of a non-literary work.

* Stepping Back and Rethinking What One Knows - In this stance, readers used their envisionments to reflect on their own previous knowledge or understandings. While prior knowledge informed their envisionments in the other stances, in this case readers used their envisionments to rethink what they already knew.

* Stepping Out and Objectifying the Experience - In this stance, readers distanced themselves from their envisionments, reflecting on and reacting to the content, to the text, or to the reading experience itself.

The nature of these stances and how they contributed to readers' understandings will be discussed below, with examples from the verbal reports of various students. One coded think-aloud protocol of "I See You Never" is included in the appendix as illustration of the ways in which the stances interplay during a single reading.

Being Out and Stepping Into An Envisionment

Being out and stepping into an envisionment describes a somewhat distant relationship between the reader and the text. The reader attempts to make initial acquaintance by asking questions, making associations, and trying to establish a context for understanding the piece. This stance occurred as the reading began, or when the reader encountered unexpected or unfamiliar vocabulary or information at any point in the reading. It was a time when the readers' envisionments did not cohere, because they had not developed a sufficient core of text-related knowledge about that particular aspect of the reading to build expectations upon. In

literature, the readers tried to make initial acquaintance with the characters, plot, and setting--and how they interrelated; in non-literary works readers tried to figure out what the topic was about. In each case, they used information from the text together with their background knowledge to get enough information to "step in."

Examples from literary texts. When the readers encountered stories, one of the things they tried to establish was who the characters were--they asked questions and made hypotheses about the characters' identities, where they came from, how they looked, and what they were like. For example, Susan simply noted the appearance of characters and made an initial hypothesis about Mr. Ramirez's ethnicity when she began to read "I See You Never." (In the following transcript segments, the actual text is unmarked, and the students' comments are underlined.)

> The soft knock came at the kitchen door, and when Mrs. O'Brian opened it okay, there's one character, Mrs. O'Brian there on the back porch were her best tenant, Mr. Ramirez, I don't know, that sounds like a Spanish name and two police officers. Okay, so right there there's four characters -- one policeman on each side of him.

Jack attempted to go beyond identification, toward an understanding (however superficial) of the character:

> From the first, he had made big money. He saved some of it, and he got drunk only once a week, a privilege that to Mrs. O'Brian's way of thinking every good workingman deserved, unquestioned and unreprimanded. Okay, so she's not really, she's not a conservative woman per se. She thinks it's ok for him to save some money and get drunk on the rest if that's what he wants to do.

When in this stance, readers sometimes also focused on the genre, the form, or the style of the piece--on any feature of the text that might help them relate the text to what they already knew. For example, when Marguerite began to read she was surprised by the language of the title and tried to understand it before moving on:

> I See You Never. That's a pretty strange title. It doesn't, I mean grammatically, it doesn't make sense. I would say, "I Never See You." But, I See You Never almost sounds like a foreigner saying this, or someone who doesn't know English that well.

As Susan read, she tried to make sense of the style in which "I See You Never" was written, pointing out the dialogue in this story and comparing it to the internal monologue used in other short stories she had read:

> Mr. Ramirez just stood there, walled in and small. "Why, Mr. Ramirez," said Mrs. O'Brian. This is going to be different from the other ones I've read. This one has conversations in it.

In "being out and stepping into an envisionment," readers also focused on the relationships among the characters, using this information to inform their understanding of the situation. Susan's attempt to understand the relationship between Mrs. O'Brian and Mr. Ramirez exemplifies this:

> He had arrived at Mrs. O'Brian's rooming house more than two years earlier and had lived there ever since. So, I wonder if Mrs. O'Brian and Mr. Ramirez are really good friends.

Readers also gathered information about the time and setting. Focusing on the setting, Jack said:

> He had come by bus from Mexico City to San Diego. Okay, so this is taking place in California. I think San Diego is in California. There he had found the clean little room with glossy blue linoleum and pictures and calendars on the flowered wall. Okay, so it's a nice quaint California rooming house. Flowered walls, that paints a pretty picture in my mind.

This stance also resulted when students encountered vocabulary unfamiliar enough to take them out of the story to puzzle over the meaning of a word (e.g., I wonder what adobe is? and What does reprimanded mean?). They sometimes also used personal experience to make contact with the situation and begin to build their envisionments. Robert said:

> From the first, he made big money. He saved some of it, and he got drunk only once a week, I wouldn't want to get drunk. And that's often. I really don't like drunks.

In each case, when reading stories, the students used the meaning sources at their disposal, their own experiences and knowledge as well as the text, to gain enough understanding to step in.

Examples from non-literary texts. During the reading of non-literary pieces, when students were in a "being out and stepping into an envisionment" relationship to the text, they focused on understanding what the topic was about, the meaning of the particular information they were reading, the genre and organization of the piece, and the surface language. From the moment they began to read, they tried to make sense by focusing on the possible topic and what they already knew about it. Marguerite's comments when reading "Birth of the Moon" exemplify this:

> A planet the size of Mars comes hurtling through space at 25,000 miles an hour and smashes into the earth. They're talking about the Big Bang theory or something.

Lesley similarly tried to make sense of the topic she will read about:

> Rocks vaporize. And a jet of hot gas squirts violently into outer space. A bright, hot flash lights up our solar system. Maybe it's explaining how the moon came about. Like the beginning.

Readers also commented on the language of the text, when it clarified their understandings and when it did not. For example, Marguerite said:

> Earth is blasted out of shape. Rocks vaporize. These are really good descriptions. I can even see like bombs bursting in air.

And Cara asked, Well, what are neutrons?

The students also used their previous knowledge and experiences to help them develop initial understandings of the text. For example, when reading about manganese and silicon, Robert stretched to make a connection from what he knew to these unfamiliar chemicals he was reading about:

> The rocks were called (also contained) manganese and silicon, just like earth. Silicon reminds me of silicone, and at home we have to keep putting silicone inside the windows because the water always gets through every room.

When engaging in a "being out and stepping into an envisionment" relationship to the text, readers used both their background experiences and the text to help them gain some sense of the particular idea that was their focus, as well as what the piece as a whole would be about. In "I See You Never," they tried to gain beginning understandings of the people, place, and situation, while in "Birth of the Moon" they focused on the information that explained the topic. In each case, they used both the information from the text and their background knowledge to gain enough ideas to "step in." Although "being out and stepping into an envisionment" occurred primarily at the beginning of the reading, readers also entered this stance during the middle of a reading, when characters, ideas, information, or language were introduced that were unfamiliar enough to take them out of their envisionments--requiring the period of acquaintanceship afforded by this stance. And, if new or totally unexpected information were to occur at the end (which was not the case in any of the pieces we used), it is conceivable that "being out and stepping in" could occur at that point in the reading as well.

Being In and Moving Through an Envisionment

Being in and moving through an envisionment describes the engaged moments when readers used personal experiences and knowledge as well as the text to push their envisionments along--where meanings begot meanings. In this stance the readers already had gained initial understandings of particular aspects of the piece, and were using the ongoing text to build an evolving envisionment. In each domain, they continued to develop their understandings beyond the superficiality of the "being out and stepping in" stance, elaborating upon and making connections among their ideas.

Examples from literary texts. During the reading of "I See You Never," this stance was marked by readers' increasing understanding of the characters, situations, feelings, and action. We can see this in Robert's comments:

She remembered the slow dragging horses and the parched jack rabbits on the road. She remembered the iron mountains and the dusty valleys and the ocean beaches that spread hundreds of miles with no sound but waves. I can see now, she's feeling sorry for Mr. Ramirez, cause, like the conditions in Mexico aren't as good as they are in San Diego -- no cars, no buildings, nothing. That would be terrible.

Susan's comments similarly demonstrate that she has begun to understand how Mrs. O'Brian and Mr. Ramirez feel about the situation:

I'm sure sorry, Mr. Ramirez, she said. I guess she doesn't sound like she wants him to leave, and I don't think he wants to go either.

In this stance, readers also used their own personal reactions to develop deeper understandings of the entire situation, as in Tanya's remarks:

Mrs. O'Brian, I see you never. I see you never. The policemen smiled at this, but Mr. Ramirez did not notice it, and they stopped smiling very soon. Don't the policemen like have any feelings toward this man? He wants to stay so badly. And he makes all this money.

Readers also gained a deeper understanding of the story by connecting past envisionments to the present reading, as Jack did in the following:

She remembered the silent towns, the warm beer, the hot thick foods each day, the beer the beer reminds me of him getting drunk once a week, the hot thick food each day reminds me of the many courses he might have had, the silent towns, silence, loneliness kind of symbolizes Mr. Ramirez. Mr. Ramirez doesn't say too much. The only time when he really shows affection or anything is when he says thank you, unpacked, like "I have my bag all ready, here's the key Mrs. O'Brian," and still he calls her Mrs. O'Brian, which means he has respect for her, I'm sure.

They also wove parts together in this stance, as Susan did in the following:

He reached out his hands and took her hand fervently, shaking it, wringing it, holding to it. "Mrs. O'Brian, I see you never, I see you never." That's where the title of the story came from. I don't think he speaks English very well. I'm not sure though, but the way he just said that, I don't think he can speak English very well.

They rounded out their understandings, empathizing with the characters, as Jack did as he considered Mrs. O'Brian's return to the table from her children's perspectives as well as her own:

I bet all her five kids feel bad because they want their dinner, don't they, and then it's cold, they're complaining, they're brats..."Hurry up Mom," said one of her sons. "It'll be cold." Oh, shut up. This kid's making me mad. It'll be cold. I mean sometimes you gotta bear with it. I mean, come on, this guy is leaving forever. I'm sure she really doesn't care if her steak is cold, personally.

Thus, when the readers were "being in and moving through an envisionment," during the

reading of a story, they were immersed in the envisionments they were creating, changing and deepening their understandings of the characters, the situation, and the motives, causes, and emotions that underlie the piece.

Examples from non-literary texts. Similarly, the "being in and moving through" stance in non-literary texts involved readers in refining their understandings and making connections as they developed their growing envisionments. Lesley used what she had just read in her attempt to understand "Birth of the Moon":

> A jet of hot gas squirted thousands of miles into space. So they're telling us that when it hit the earth that parts of it clipped the moon, and that's why they're alike and that's why they're different.

Readers also tried to follow the logic of an extended presentation of given information, in their attempt to clarify their understandings. The following segment of Susan's transcript exemplifies this:

> The big crash blasted the impactor apart. Okay, so that means that when this object hit the earth, that this crash blew it apart so it was all in little pieces. Its iron core tore away from its rocky surface, Okay, it had iron, like metal stuff in the middle, and rock on the outside, but I thought the core was, oh, yeah, okay. That's right. I thought the core was made of rock, but no, it's not. It's made of iron. That's better now. and plunged straight into the center of Earth. Okay, so I wonder if that's how these, how we got that stuff in the middle, in the core, of our planet. Rocks vaporized. Parts of the earth's surface were ripped to bits too. Okay, so not only was the impactor blown apart, part of the earth was too. So, now I'm beginning to see.

In this stance, readers used their related knowledge to elaborate their envisionments, as Marguerite did:

> And the moon rocks had very few volatiles (materials that boil away during the hot explosions, such as water, sodium, potassium, and lead). Oh, maybe that's why there aren't life forms on the moon, because there's very little water, and you can't live without water.

Also, sometimes they used personal experiences to help them work through new understandings, as Jack did in the following:

> How could they explain this confusing rock chemistry? Why were the moon rocks like earth, but different from it too? Well, not everything's the same. Even if it comes from, like a baby and a mother, I mean, I'm not exactly like my mom. I'm not anything like my mom, actually. Cause I'm a boy and she's a girl. But, I'm also different like everything else is different. It doesn't have to be exactly the same to come from it.

In "being in and moving through," the readers used information in the text as well as from their own personal experiences to move their understandings along. In "I See You Never" they took each new description, action, or event and used it to fill out their understanding of

the story, while in "Birth of the Moon" they tried to understand each part of the explanation, linking it to what they already understood the text to have said.

For the students and texts studied, the first two stances predominated, with the readers' major focus either on getting acquainted or stepping in and moving through their envisionments. However, the next two stances also occurred consistently in the readings, even though less frequent.

Stepping Back and Rethinking What One Knows

Stepping back and reflecting on what one knows describes the thoughts that occurred when readers who were already immersed in creating an envisionment stepped outside of that world for a moment --using their growing understandings as ways to reflect upon their own lives or their own knowledge.

Examples from literary texts. We can this see in Marguerite's comments about food she had not yet tried:

> Mr. Ramirez saw the long table, laid with clean white linen, and set with a platter, cool shining glasses, a water pitcher with ice cubes floating inside it, and a bowl of fresh potato salad, and one of bananas and oranges, cubed and sugared. I don't think I've ever had bananas and oranges cubed. And I don't think I would like sugar on them, but maybe I would. It might be interesting to try.

Tanya similarly stepped out of the text to reflect on her life:

> She pulled the chair out and sat down. She picked up the shining knife and fork and started once more upon her steak. It never happened to me, but I know I would feel like Mrs. O'Brian and not be able to eat my steak. She makes me see you don't have to pretend when you're feeling so sad.

Examples from non-literary texts. In this stance, readers' relationships to the text occurred in a similar way when they read non-literary pieces. They used their understandings of the text to inform (and often rethink and revise) the knowledge they already had. We can see this in Robert's comments:

> As a result a lot of material went into orbit around the earth. It formed a disk, sort of like a pizza. That reminds me of Jupiter or Saturn because they have rings of dust and stuff. I wonder if it isn't dust. Maybe it's like chemicals like in the moon, and maybe they are part of another impactor crash.

Marguerite used what she read to rethink the little she had heard about moon rocks:

> In the 1960s and 1970s, astronauts on the Apollo missions brought back moon rocks to Earth's laboratories for the very first time. I remember hearing about that. I thought they were in a museum, but maybe they can't be. I wonder if they have radiation and volatiles that make them dangerous, or maybe they're really more like the earth than people think.

And John used what he read to hypothesize about another theory:

> Our round, gray moon was formed. So, maybe this is how Haley's comet was formed too.

In other stances, readers used their background knowledge and experiences to help them understand the text, but in this stance they used their envisionments of the text world in reverse--to help them reflect on something they knew, did, or felt before having read the text. In this sense, "being out and stepping into an envisionment" and "being in and moving through an envisionment" involved use of prior knowledge to inform and enrich their envisionments, while in "stepping back and rethinking what one knows" readers used their envisionments to reflect on and sometimes enrich their real world. There was a symbiotic relationship as the readers' focus moved between "real world" knowledge and experiences and "text envisionments," permitting each to illuminate the other. Thus, the degree of elaboration of the readers' responses influenced the potential richness of both text and personal knowledge.

Stepping Out and Objectifying the Experience

In stepping out and objectifying the experience, the readers distanced themselves from the final envisionments they had developed. They reflected on the reading activity, their understandings, and their reactions. They also commented on the text and the reading experience itself.

Examples from literary texts. Robert commented on the piece as a whole as he finished reading "I See You Never":

> That wouldn't be what I would choose to read, but it was pretty good. It's sad, but good. I think I like how it was written.

Marguerite reflected on her envisionment:

> So, she probably liked the guy. It finally hit her that he's going away, and she's never going to see him again. She probably liked him a lot.

And Jack pointed out the questions he still had:

> The whole story is very sad. This is an interesting story, but it's confusing in parts. I still don't know what time period it's in. I still really don't know exactly what relationship they have. Obviously she's just his landlady, I guess. So, I don't know. This is an interesting story.

Examples from non-literary texts. The students commented similarly in "Birth of the Moon." Susan attempted to pull the parts together and said:

> Okay, so everything fits together, so they think. I like that theory too. I can see why its their favorite theory, it tells everything, and it really helps you figure out what happened with the impactor crash and the chemicals on the earth and the moon.

Marguerite commented on the text:

> That was an interesting article. Confusing though. It was probably for a science magazine or something. But they should have explained some of the vocabulary a little more. I mean, I knew what they were saying, but maybe not everyone would.

Robert commented briefly on his judgment of the piece and his experience:

> That's it. That was pretty good. I learned something from it. I didn't know where the moon might have come from. That was interesting.

In each of these cases, the students distanced themselves from their final envisionment, judged it and its parts, focused on the text's structure, or commented on the meanings they had (or had not) made.

Over time, across the reading of an entire piece, each reader wove a growing web of understandings and images. It was woven through the variety of stances the reader took along the way--getting acquainted, using meaning to build meaning, associating and reflecting, and finally distancing. Through these shifting relationships between self and text, readers consciously structured their own understandings.

Literary and Non-literary Readings

While the students in the study entered into each stance during their reading of both literary and non-literary pieces, their particular concerns and the reasoning strategies they used differed substantially. It is these differences that seem to form the basic distinctions between the reading of literary and non-literary texts for the students whom we were studying. The two passages chosen as examples differ sharply in content. However, similar differences in the ways in which the readers framed their envisionments were apparent in the other passages.

Reaching Toward a Horizon vs. Maintaining a Point of Reference

In any reading, the reader is not only guided by the local envisionment as it exists at that point in time, but also by the reader's sense of the whole. However, the findings of this study indicate that the role of that overall sense is quite different in literary as contrasted with non-literary contexts. During the reading of literature, the sense of the whole changed and developed as the envisionment unfolded-- it existed as a constantly moving horizon of possibilities (see Iser, 1978, for discussions of horizon). These possibilities emerged out of the envisionment itself, focusing on the human situation with all its uncertainties and

ambiguities--bringing to bear all that the readers knew about people, situations, relationships, and feelings. In non-literary readings, on the other hand, the sense of the whole seems to have provided a steady reference point. As the envisionment unfolded, the new details may have clarified the nature of the whole, but they rarely changed it. The readers relied on the constancy or sense of the whole in order to monitor their initial understandings (or misunderstandings) of the details. Thus, although readers of both literary and non-literary texts continually maintained a sense of the whole, the nature of this whole was somewhat different. Reaching toward a horizon or maintaining a point of reference occurred across the reading of each overall piece -- providing an overall orchestration within and across the readers' changing stances. Their understanding of literary texts seemed to be constrained by their notions of human (or imaginary) possibility, while their understanding of non-literary texts seemed to be constrained by their perceptions of the topic.

Reaching Toward a Horizon

The reading of literature is guided by inquisitiveness, by the opening of possibilities. Readers in this study took each idea they read and tried to understand it in terms of their sense of the whole, rather than as a stepping stone along the way. They clarified ideas as they read and related them to the growing and changing horizon--that horizon modified the parts and the parts modified the horizon. In doing this, readers continually tried to open possibilities, see many sides, and go beyond their envisionments. Sensitivity and intuition moved them to consider the underside of the story, projecting unspoken emotions and reactions beyond those ideas that were more directly expressed. They did this by searching feelings, intentions, motivations, implications, assumptions, values, and attitudes. Whether moving toward horizons or going beyond their immediate envisionments, their focus was always on the human situation, on the "vicissitudes of life," particular or general. While the readers attempted to make sense of their local envisionments, they did it in a context of making sense of the horizon, the possibilities of the whole, as well.

Let us look once again at the students' comments to "I See You Never" for evidence of these concerns. Throughout the reading of the literary pieces, the students attempted to weave the ideas they read into their own changing notions of the complete story. They treated new ideas as informative not only for their use in momentary understandings, but also as having implications for where they believed the story was heading. For example, Cara fit what she read into her shifting horizon (how she thought the story might evolve) when she read these comments by Mr. Ramirez in the text:

> I look all right, don't I? And I don't want to go back. Well, he probably doesn't want to go back because he's sort of made himself a good life in the United States. And if he ever went to Mexico, he might never be able to immigrate to the U.S.

She did so again when she read Mrs. O'Brian's lament:

> I just realized...I'll never see him again, and said, Well, Mrs. O'Brian is probably upset because, well, when she described the poor [Mexican] landscapes, I can sort of see how it will be for him...

Paul also related the local ideas he was focusing on to his growing horizon, to their possibilities for the whole, as he read:

> One of her sons, behind her, said that her dinner was getting cold, but she shook her head at him and turned back to Mr. Ramirez. Right now, at a time like this, she wants to point all her attention to Mr. Ramirez because she may not be able to see him any more. She doesn't pay attention to her child right now because they will be left, but Mr. Ramirez will be gone.

As the students focused on the implications of particular ideas for the horizon (where they thought the story might lead), they also turned each idea they read around, wanting it to say more, using its potential to fill out the unspoken. They attempted to create a three dimensional world, concerned not only with what was said, but also with what was not. Readers thus invented intentions, motivations, and causalities that went beyond their immediate envisionments of the text, and in doing so, created an envisionment much larger than the one they already possessed.

For example, Lesley tried to uncover motivation as she read:

> At this table sat Mrs. O'Brian's children, her three grown sons...and the two younger daughters were staring at the policemen as they ate. So, she must have baked for the policeman. Maybe she's trying to get Mr. Ramirez out of trouble.

And Paul tried to understand Mrs. O'Brian's intentions as he read Mrs. O'Brian's comment to Mr. Ramirez:

> I'm sorry, Mr. Ramirez, she said, I wish there was something I could do. It's like she knew all the time that he was here illegally, but she was just trying to help, I guess.

In making the following comment, Lesley was not only interested in motivation, but also tried to "fill out" the character of Mrs. O'Brian, in order to make her more lifelike:

> Pies were baking. Oh, she must like to bake pies.

Tanya tried to understand Mr. Ramirez's reasons for studying the cityscape by stepping beyond her sense of the story thus far to a time when Mr. Ramirez would already be gone, by commenting:

> He looked at the balconies and fire escapes.. He must be looking at them and trying to keep them for memories.

And Crystal tried to understand Mrs. O'Brian's reasons for reminiscing about Mexico by projecting its implications for the whole story:

> with no sound but the waves, no cars..., So, it seems like she's trying to remember what it was like so she can see what he's going back to.

In reading literature, then, the students took the information they read and immediately used it for larger purposes, purposes that went beyond what they were presently reading, already understood, or had imagined might be.

Maintaining a Point of Reference

But, the understanding of science and social studies was different; with these passages, the students used the content they read to narrow in on increasingly more specific meaning. They began their reading trying to gain a notion of the topic, at least in some broad sense. This done, throughout the reading they built local envisionments by trying to understand and clarify what the particular idea they were focusing on meant in terms of its relationship to the topic, also using it to contribute toward their growing understanding of the topic. There was no distant horizon, no questioning of how the whole might evolve. Instead, their envisionments contained few ambiguities as they narrowed the possibilities of meaning and built a growing web of understandings, all related to the topic which served as their point of reference.

The following examples illustrate the students' attempts to maintain a point of reference. When reading, Robert said:

> Like Earth, they contained several different isotopes of oxygen... I'm wondering what that has to do with the moon.

Marguerite tried to understand what she had just read by relating it to the moon as her stable point of reference when she read:

> The mystery of the moon's birth would soon be solved. They're trying to see how the moon was formed.

So too did Crystal, as she read:

> ...and plunged straight into the center of the Earth. So, this is all just supporting the impactor theory.

In non-literary pieces, readers were concerned with clarifying their envisionments and developing a greater understanding of the topic. They focused on connecting information --the text's and their own--that was related to the topic, as a way to make the individual parts cohere and their understanding of the topic take shape. When they asked questions, the questions were the sort that are topic-related and are generally provided by the text; often they anticipated the text, and these questions were soon answered.

Cara built her understanding after reading:

> So the moon was left without metallic iron. Well, that's interesting 'cause it sort of explains what they were trying to explain in the beginning of the article.

Lesley also built his understanding of the topic as he read:

> A jet of hot gas squirted 1000 miles into space. So what they're telling is that when it hit the Earth that parts of it clipped to the moon, and that's why they're alike and that's why they're different.

Thus, the reading of literary texts and the reading of non-literary texts appear to be guided by different concerns and involve different kinds of thought. The reading of a literary work seems to operate much as Polanyi's (1958) notion of indwelling, where the person lives within the experience, stretching it in all directions, questioning and reconciling the sometimes disparate parts into a coherent and productive whole--readers open possibilities and move toward an increased understanding of causes, implications, and feelings by maintaining an ever changing horizon that represents their sense of the possibilities of how the story might evolve. In contrast, in reading non-literary texts they elaborate on their understanding of the topic by maintaining a relatively stable point of reference toward which they build their understandings.

Discussion

This study provides a description of the process of understanding during the reading of literary and non-literary works and suggests the different approaches toward meaning readers engage in when reading each type of text. When they approach a text, there are four broad recursive stances readers adopt to carry them through the experience. These are: "being out and stepping in," where readers make acquaintance with aspects of the piece with which they are unfamiliar; "being in and moving through," where they use their envisionments to inform their growing understandings; "stepping back and rethinking what one knows," where they use their envisionments to reflect on personal experiences, ideas, or knowledge; and "stepping out and objectifying the experience," where they look critically at their envisionments, their reading experiences, and the text itself. Across the reading of an entire piece, understanding is in the act of becoming, as readers use their past experiences, the text, and their growing envisionments in different ways as they move in and out of the various stances.

The stances readers took toward the texts they read were shaped in part by their initial decision to treat the texts either as literary or non-literary. While readers entered similar stances in each reading experience, the focus of their concerns within each stance and thus the ways in which they approached the making of meaning differed based upon the distinction they had chosen (if even temporarily). In reading non-literary works, the students worked closely, using the topic as a frame of reference, building and refining meanings as they moved toward a more complete understanding of the topic-- toward an understanding of what is. However, during the reading of literature, they treated their growing understandings more openly, raising possibilities about the horizon as well as about their momentary ideas, focusing on the human situation, seeking to understand interplays between events and emotions and eventualities--toward an understanding of what might be. Both approaches moved the readers to understand, but in different ways, toward different meanings.

These findings suggest that meaning develops at two levels simultaneously. First, student readers have different assumptions about responding to literary versus non-literary texts, and these affect the ways in which they orient themselves toward creating their momentary understandings as well as their views of the potential of each piece as a whole. At the same

time, the similarities in the processes involved in responding across the different text types indicate that the four stances represent a range of meaning-making options that underlie developing understandings in general -- regardless of text type. This suggests that rather than moving "up" a scale of abstraction to an "interpretive" level, students learn to develop a store of qualitatively different options to use in particular circumstances for particular purposes.

Such distinctions are useful for researchers and potentially informative to instruction in a number of ways; they have the potential to increase understanding of the processes of literary reading, and also point toward the beginnings of research into "process" approaches in literature instruction. First, the notion of stances based on readers' growing envisionments can provide researchers with an alternative to existing category systems that are primarily based on types or levels of response. Second, the stances are linked to a process of coming to understand--a recursive process of approaching and extending the understanding of texts. Thus, it would be possible to begin to analyze the extent to which readers are or are not willing or able to extend their envisonments in order to reach a fuller response. It may then also be possible to examine reasons underlying readers' successes or difficulties in extending their responses. For example, there is initial indication that the poorer readers in this study (or those for whom the text was difficult) often spent much more time in the "being out and stepping into an envisionment" stance than did the other readers. Considering how students learn to acquire the different stances, as well as the ways in which they engage in literary and non-literary readings, might be useful in conceptualizing reader-based instructional approaches where both students and teachers can become more aware of the array of meaning- making options that are available in the development of understanding. Such research could also focus on "process" instruction where teachers, through the questions they ask, can provide scaffolds of language and thought that help students gain the momentary information they seek while also serving as models of the meaning-making strategies they can use in other situations. In addition, research into the inhibiting effects on envisionment-building and literary understanding which result from literature instruction that is primarily information driven (non-literary) can serve to further the movement toward instructional reform in the teaching of literature.

A final issue suggested by these findings focuses on purposes underlying a reading activity and the kinds of texts that are read. For example, different kinds of texts as well as different purposes for reading may lead to different patterns in the way students orient themselves to the text and orchestrate their stances. The particular purposes and the particular text, as well as the particular kinds of instruction experienced, all are likely to affect the strategies students learn to use in academic settings. As Bruner (1986) suggests, it is likely that in some instances readers use both types of approaches, to varying degrees, when reading both types of texts for both types of purposes. Research into this issue will be particularly important as we move toward understanding the place of literary understanding in the development of enriched thinking.

Note

The colleagueship, good ideas, and hard work of the research team added immeasurably to every aspect of the study. I would like to thank Noreen Benton, John Sandman, Mary Sawyer, Francine Stayter, Dee Warner, and Beth Weatherby for their work and their ideas. I would also like to thank the students, their teachers, and district personnel without whose cooperation this work would not be.

References

Angelotti, M.L. (1972). A comparison of elements in the written free response of eighth graders to a junior novel and an adult novel. Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University.

Applebee, A.N. (1978). The child's concept of story: Ages two to seventeen. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Applebee, A.N., Langer, J.A., and Mullis, I.V.S. (1989). Crossroads in American education: A summary of findings from the nation's report card. Princeton, NJ: National Assessment of Educational Progress, Educational Testing Service.

Auerbach, L. (1974). The interaction between social attitudes and responses to three short stories. Doctoral dissertation, New York University.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1973). Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics. Ann Arbor: Ardis.

Barthes, R. (1974). S/Z. New York: Hill and Wang.

Birnbaum, Shira (1986). Birth of the moon. Science World, 43, (pp.4-6).

Bishop, Elizabeth (1968). The fish. In Stanley Peterson (Ed.), Designs in poetry (pp. 64-66). New York: Macmillan.

Bloom, A. (1987). The closing of the American mind. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Booth, W., (1988). The company we keep: The ethics of fiction. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bradbury, Ray (1973). I see you never. In A. Purves (Ed.), Literature education in ten countries. New York: Halstead Press.

Britton, J. (1983). Writing and the story world. In B. Kroll & G. Wells (Eds.), Explorations in the development of writing. New York: Wiley.

Brody, P., DeMilo, C., & Purves, A.C. (1989). The current state of assessment in literature. Albany, NY: Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature, SUNY Albany.

Bruner, J. S. (1986). Actual minds, possible worlds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cheyney, L. (1987). American memory: A report on the humanities in the nation's public schools. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities.

Coffin, R. T. (1966). Forgive my guilt. In S. Dunning, E. Lueders, & H. Smith (Eds.), Reflections on a gift of watermelon pickle (pp. 79). New York: Scott Foresman.

Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A nation at risk. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Cooper, C.R. (1969). Preferred modes of literary response. Doctoral dissertation, University of California at Berkeley.

Culler, J. (1980). Prolegomena to a theory of reading. In S. Suleiman and I. Crossman (Eds.), The reader in the text. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Dillon, G. (1982). Styles of reading. Poetics Today, 3, 77-88.

Elstein, A., Shulman, L. & Sprafka, S. (1978). Medical problem-solving: The analysis of clinical reasoning. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Faggiani, L.A. (1971). The relationship of attitude to response in the reading of a poem by ninth grade students. Doctoral dissertation, New York University.

Fillmore, C.J. (1981). Ideal readers and real readers. Proceedings of the Georgetown University Roundtable Conference, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Grice, H.P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole and J.L. Morgan (Eds.), Syntax and semantics, Vol. 3, Speech acts. New York: Seminar Press.

Hebbelinck, George (1973). Man by the fountain. In A. Purves, Literature education in ten countries. New York: Halstead Press.

Hirsch, E.D. (1987). Cultural literacy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Hunt, R., & Vipond, D. (1985). Crash-testing a transactional model of literary learning. Reader, 14, 23-39.

Iser, W. (1974). The implied reader: Patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Iser, W. (1978). The act of reading. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jacobsen, M. (1982). Looking for literary space: The willing suspension of disbelief revisited. Research in the Teaching of English, 16, 21-38.

Klemenz-Belgardt, E. (1981). American research on response to literature: The empirical studies. Poetics, 10, 357-380.

Langer, J.A. (1985). Levels of questioning: An alternative view. Reading Research Quarterly 20.

Langer, J.A. (1986). Children reading and writing: Structures and strategies. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Langer, J.A. (1987). How readers construct meaning: An analysis of reader performance on standardized test items. In R. Freedle (Ed.), Cognitive and linguistic analyses of standardized test performance. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Langer, S. (1942). Philosophy in a new key. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Langer, S. (1967). Mind: An essay on human feeling. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Mason, J. (1974). Adolescent judgement as evidenced in response to poetry, Educational Review 26, 124-139.

McGreal, S.S. (1976). Teacher questioning behavior during classroom discussion of short stories. Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (1973). Literature: Responding to literature. Washington, D.C.: Education Commission of the States.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (1981). Reading, thinking, and writing. Denver: Education Commission of the States.

Polanyi, M. (1958). Personal knowledge. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Pratt, M.L. (1976). Toward a speech act theory of literary discourse. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Purves, A.C. (1973). Literature education in ten countries. Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell.

Rabinowitz, P. (1987). Before reading: Narrative conventions and the politics of interpretation. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Ravitch, D., & Finn C. What do our 17 year olds know? A report of the first national assessment of history and literature. New York: Harper Row.

Rosenblatt, L. (1978). The reader, the text, the poem. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Smith, B.H. (1979). On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature to Language. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sontag, S. (1956). Against interpretation and other essays. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Suleiman, S.R., and Crosman, I. (Eds.). (1980). The reader in the text. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Todd, L.P., & Curti, M. (1986). Women redouble efforts to win equal rights. Triumph of the American nation (pp. 371-73). New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich.

Vipond, D., & Hunt R. (1984). Point-driven understanding: Pragmatic and cognitive dimensions of literary reading. Poetics, 13, 261-277.

Weber, A.M. (1973). The responses of college students to film. Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois.

Appendix

Jack's think-aloud: "I See You Never"
(selected sections)

Stance

1 I See You Never. That means someone's probably never going to see anybody. Maybe he's blind. The soft knock came at the kitchen door. The soft knock--which means maybe he's not a mean person, a soft person. And when Mrs. O'Brian opened it, O'Brian, that's my girlfriend's name, so I picture my girlfriend's mother. She's a very nice old lady. There on the back porch were her best tenant, Mr. Ramirez, maybe Hispanic or something like that, and two police officers. Police officers, that means there might be trouble. One on each side of him. Oh, maybe they're taking him away. Mr. Ramirez just stood there, walled in and small. Obviously there's something going on, because maybe Mr. Ramirez got arrested. ...He had come by bus from Mexico City. He's Hispanic to San Diego. Okay, so this is taking place in California. I think San Diego is in California. There he had found the clean little room with the glossy blue linoleum and pictures and flowers on the flowered walls. Flowered walls, that paints a pretty picture in my mind. And Mrs. O'Brian as the strict but kindly landlady. I picture this heavy set woman, blond hair, old, caring. You know, almost like a fairy godmother type. Strict, neat and tidy, but always willing to give of herself. During the war, What war, Korean, Viet Nam, I don't know when this took place--maybe even earlier, he had worked in an airplane factory and made parts for the planes that flew off somewhere. Somewhere, that doesn't give much of an explanation of where that is. And even now, after the war, he still held this job. Okay, so maybe he did something at the airplane factory, in his job. Maybe that's why the police officers are there. I don't know. Mr. Ramirez gazed at his feet as if they had carried him into all this trouble. Obviously he's in trouble. Maybe it has to do with Mrs. O'Brian. He did something to her that he's ashamed of. "What happened, Mr. Ramirez, asked Mrs. O'Brian?"...."I have been here 30 months," said Mr. Ramirez quietly, He seems like he's ashamed of something, I'm not real sure, looking at Mrs. O'Brian's plump hands. Oh yes, she's plump, that's exactly how I pictured her. "That's six months too long," said one policeman. Six months, that means he should have left at 24 months. Right, 30 minus 6 is 24. And 24 months is two years, so 30 months would be 2 1/2 years. Okay.

2 "He only had a temporary visa. We've just gotten around to looking for him." Oh, I see, he's an illegal alien. Okay, I understand. Maybe he's a drug smuggler. No, he wouldn't be staying at Mrs O'Brian's house if he was a drug smuggler because she doesn't like dirty things in the house, I don't think. He's obviously an illegal alien.

1 Soon after Mr. Ramirez had arrived, he bought a little radio for his room. I don't know. I don't understand that.

2 Evenings he turned it up very loud and enjoyed it. Maybe to get away from everything. I mean, she had five kids and her in the little house. That might get a little noisy. Maybe he enjoyed being here... Maybe he didn't like it where he came from....Obviously he didn't like where he came from, and that's probably why he stayed the 30 months instead of 24....And on many nights he had walked silent streets, seeing the bright clothes in the windows, and bought some of them. Obviously he's trying to break out. He's from a lonely culture. I see you never. Never, that brings about a thought of loneliness. And his room is small, and he's always trying to, maybe he doesn't like it where he came from. Maybe it was real lonely....

1 "So, here I am," said Mr. Ramirez, "now to tell you that I must give up my room, Mrs. O'Brian." Why does he have to give up his room? Obviously he's being taken away, so he has to give up his room. But to who?

3 "I come to get my baggage and clothes and go with these men." Okay, so he's being forced to leave. These men. Why does he call them men? I hate policemen....Not that I've dealt with them many times in my life, but what they're doing to Mr. Ramirez makes me not trust them.....

1 "Back to Mexico?" "Yes, to Lagos...." I wish I had a map here. I don't know where any of these places are.

2 "I'm sorry, Mr. Ramirez." I guess she probably likes him. Maybe she's one of his lady friends...He says he has a few lady friends...."Okay, here's the key, Mrs. O'Brian," Mr. Ramirez said. "I have my bag already." So, he gave her they key to his room....He only has one bag and he's been there for 2 1/2 years. My God, I went away for a week last week and I brought four bags...."You've been a good tenant," said Mrs. O'Brian. A good tenant, is that all? "Thank you, Mrs. O'Brian," he said softly. He closed his eyes. He's probably choked up because he was leaving. He's leaving her and he's choked up about that. He will miss her....One of her sons behind her said that her dinner was getting cold. So what. Mr. Ramirez is leaving. That makes me mad. The kid is demanding his dinner now. But, he was leaving, and they were never going to see him again....But she shook her head at him and turned back to Mr. Ramirez. Good for you, Mrs. O'Brian. She remembered a visit she had once made to some Mexican border towns...the silent towns, the warm beer. The silent towns, silence, loneliness, kind of symbolizes Mr. Ramirez. Mr. Ramirez doesn't say too much. The only time he shows affection is when he says thank you. Like "I have my bag already, here's the key Mrs. O'Brian." And he still calls her Mrs. O'Brian, which means he has respect for her, I'm sure.

3 "I don't want to go back, Mrs. O'Brian," he said weakly. Weakly, that sounds like what I said last week. Last week in Washington I didn't want to come back. Now I know why. 'Cause I'm swamped with homework, and I don't know-- there's so much to do, and my friends are all depressed....

30

2 "I like it here. I want to stay here." That's what I said, that's exactly what I said last week and I know what it feels like to go someplace and you like it so much that you don't want to come back...."Mrs. O'Brian", he cried suddenly, tears rolling out from under his eyelids...."Mrs. O'Brian, I see you never. I see you never." Does this mean he'll never see her again? ...I never heard someone say that. Well, maybe he doesn't speak English that well and kind of get the order mixed up....Obviously he likes this lady. Maybe it's like a mother to him....She watched them go down the porch steps....She must be very sad. She pulled out the chair and sat down. She is sad, I can tell. I bet all her five kids feel bad because they want their dinner. And then it's cold and they're complaining. They're brats ...."What's wrong, Ma?" asked her son. Oh, come on, don't they understand what's going on? Well, maybe they don't.... "I just realized," said Mrs. O'Brian, "I'll never see Mr. Ramirez again." Well, that's what he's trying to say, I see you never, which is I'll never see Mr. Ramirez again. But they said it in different ways.

4 The whole story is very sad. This is an interesting story, but it's confusing in parts. I still don't know what time period it's in. I still really don't know what relationship they have. Obviously she's just his landlady, but I don't know. This is an interesting story.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM:

CENTER FOR THE LEARNING AND TEACHING OF LITERATURE

School of Education
1400 Washington Avenue ED B-9
University at Albany, State University of New York
Albany, NY 12222

REPORT SERIES:

EMPHASES IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1.1 The Teaching of Literature in Programs with Reputations for Excellence in English.
Arthur N. Applebee, $6.00.

This study is one part of a comprehensive analysis of the teaching of literature in American high schools. It provides an initial context for framing the instructionally most pressing questions in the teaching of literature.

1.2 A Study of Book-Length Works Taught in High School English Courses.
Arthur N. Applebee, $7.00.

This report presents the results of a national survey of book-length works currently being taught in public, parochial, and private secondary schools. The study replicates and extends a study completed 25 years ago by including information about the effects of tracking and of ethnicity on the literature selections that schools require students to read.

1.3 Elementary Antecedents of Literature in Secondary School
Sean A. Walmsley and Trudy P. Walp, $6.00.

This study explores the elementary antecedents of literature in secondary schools, reporting the findings of an interview study of elementary teachers' instructional philosophies and practices in the teaching of literature.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

2.1 The Process of Understanding Literature.
Judith A. Langer, $5.00.

This study focuses on the processes involved in coming to understand literature and the ways in which they differ from how students construct meaning when reading other types of texts. Findings suggest possibilities for process-oriented approaches to literature instruction.